The Clarion Call

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Newsletter of the Department of Massachusetts

Department Commander's Message

Brothers,

This is my last Clarion Call as Department Commander. Thank you for the trust you have placed in me and for your support over the last two years. I could not have done it without the hard work of the Brothers of the Order.

This is a huge year for our country and the SUVCW. We are celebrating 250 years of our Nation's existence. We should all be proud of this and take every opportunity we can to celebrate by participating in events and also by planning our own Camp events to honor this momentous occasion. This isn't a celebration of 1776, it is a celebration of our 250 years of history, and the US Civil War is an important part of that history. If you have not done so in the past, attend the oratory reading of the Declaration of Independence. This is how the news of the declaration was passed to everyone in the county in 1776. Contact your nearest Sons of the American Revolution Chapter and see what events they have planned, and ask to participate. There is a lot going on this year, so get involved and enjoy the occasion.

As you have seen in some of the "Civil War Sons of American Patriots" biographies that have been posted, many of our Union Ancestors were descended from soldiers who fought to gain our independence. These Union soldiers were fighting to preserve what their grandfathers had forged. Some, like brother Paul J. Revere and Edward H. Revere, gave their last full measure of devotion. Paul was killed in action at Gettysburg, and Edward at Antietam.

Lastly, I encourage you to attend both the Department Encampment in April and the National Encampment the last weekend in July. You all saw Commander in Chief Tucker's General Order regarding Fraternity and Encampment, which is the greatest opportunity to engage in Fraternity with brothers from every Camp in the Department. At National Encampment, you will meet brothers, as I have, from all over the country, and form lasting friendships with these Brothers.

Thank you for all you do, and I wish you all an enjoyable summer full of great activities.

In Fraternity, Charity, and Loyalty,

Rod

Department of Massachusetts

2026 Encampment Registration Form
Friday, April 24 – Saturday, April 25

Embassy Suites Marlborough
123 Boston Post Rd W, Marlborough, MA 0175

Room rate: $189.95 per night if reserved by 3/25/26
Booking instructions: Call the hotel at 508-485-5900 and select the option "0" to speak with a front desk agent and ask to book a room under the **SUVCW Group** or follow the link below.
https://www.hilton.com/en/attend-my-event/bosmaes-92u-7494efce-6b2e-4a26-b195-6bd4f7910252/

Please indicate below if you plan to bring guests to the buffet lunch or banquet.

	Price	Number	Subtotal
Encampment Registration	$20.00		
Friday Night Campfire	Free		
Saturday Breakfast Buffet	Free for hotel guests		
Saturday Lunch Buffet	$35.00		
Saturday Evening Banquet	$45.00		
Total A La Carte	$100		

Discounted Package Rate (Includes all of the above)	$80.00		

Rooms must be booked by 3/25/26 to receive discounted rate

Encampment registration must be received by April 17, 2026

Friday Night "Campfire"
Entertainment by
Red Horse Oldtime Duo
Playing Irish, Scottish,
Oldtime, and Civil War tunes

Dinner Buffet
Assorted Selection of Salads
Freshly Baked Rolls with Butter
Pasta of the Day
Chicken and Beef Entrees
Seasonal Vegetables

Alternative plated vegetarian option
available with advance notice

Lunch Buffet
Sandwich and salad – plus
Pasta Special of the Day
Chef's Daily Hot Entrée
Seasonal Vegetables and Potatoes

Return this registration form with a check or money order payable to Dept of Mass SUVCW to:
John Dupre', Secretary
353 Shore Drive
Laconia, NH 03246

Save the Date!

2026 NATIONAL ENCAMPMENT AT GETTYSBURG!

The 145th National Encampment of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War and the Allied Orders will be held in Gettysburg, PA, July 30-August 2, 2026. We would like to have a large delegation from the Department attend. Please mark your calendar and plan on joining us!

Pre-Registration deadline for the encampment is 18 July 2026. Registration at the door will be $25. The Encampment registration form can be found on the SUVCW website at:
https://suvcw.org/national-encampment-registration

This form does NOT replace completed Credentials Card Form 2, which is required to complete your registration at the Encampment. You will not be able to register at the Encampment without a complete Credentials Card from your Department Secretary. Pre-registration will be acknowledged by e-mail only and not individually by mail.

The 2026 National Encampment will be held at the Aspire Hotel & Suites in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. The Eisenhower Hotel is directly connected to the Aspire, and attendees may choose to stay at either property. Both properties offer convenient on-site lodging, including breakfast, and easy access to all encampment meetings and events.

Room rates are $145 per night at the Aspire Hotel & Suites and $135 per night at the Eisenhower Hotel (rates do not include applicable taxes). The Aspire offers newer accommodations, while the Eisenhower features more traditional, dated rooms. These group rates may be available before and after the encampment dates, subject to availability.

All guest rooms include a mini-refrigerator, microwave, single-serve coffee maker, hair dryer, iron, and ironing board. Room rates also include a hot breakfast buffet. Check-in begins at 3:00 PM, and check-out is 11:00 AM.

Auxiliary members are encouraged to stay on the Aspire side of the hotel, as the ASUVCW meetings will be held in the Aspire ballroom. SUVCW meetings will take place on the Eisenhower side.

To reserve a room, please call (717) 334-8121 and reference the group name “Allied Orders of the Grand Army of the Republic,” along with your arrival and departure dates.

Online reservation links will be provided soon.

26th Annual Abraham Lincoln Birthday Brunch Held in Wakefield

On Sunday, February 15, 2026, the Department of Massachusetts held its 26th annual Abraham Lincoln Birthday Brunch at "Upstairs at Harrington's," 17 Water Street in Wakefield, Massachusetts. Past Department Commander John W. Bates III served as Master of Ceremonies. National Chaplain Dexter A. Bishop, PDC, offered the Invocation to open the brunch and the Benediction to close the program.

A great turnout for the Lincoln Birthday Brunch

Approximately forty guests attended, including representatives of the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company of Massachusetts; the William E. Carter American Legion Post #16; residents of the Massachusetts Veterans Home at Chelsea; the Sgt. William H. Carney Chapter, National Society Daughters of the Union 1861–1865; the Woman's Relief Corps; the Ladies of the Grand Army of the Republic; the Daughters of Union Veterans of the Civil War 1861–1865; the Auxiliary to the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War; and several Department of Massachusetts Camps, including Gen. Frederick W. Lander Camp No. 5, Maj. Thomas B. Griffith Camp No. 22, Willie Grout Camp No. 25, Col. Robert Gould Shaw Camp No. 54, and Charles H. Bond Camp No. 104.

Attendees enjoyed Harrington's well-known breakfast fare, including Eggs Benedict, French toast, and their signature Whiskey Chicken. After dessert—President Lincoln's birthday cake and coffee—the program continued.

Commander-in-Chief Kevin P. Tucker

Following his welcome and recognition of organization leaders and honored guests, Brother Bates presented a moving vignette describing Abraham Lincoln's visits to Union hospitals during the Civil War.
Commander-in-Chief Kevin P. Tucker then spoke about the upcoming 250th anniversary of the United States on July 4th, reminding those present that President Lincoln and Union veterans worked together to fulfill the promise of the Declaration of Independence.

This year's featured speaker was Mr. Chuck Veit, a naval reenactor, historian, and author known for his original research on 19th-century U.S. Navy history, particularly the Civil War at sea. Mr. Veit currently serves as President of the Navy and Marine Living History Association, a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting awareness of American naval history through public events and presentations. Mr. Veit has authored several well-regarded books exploring lesser-known episodes, technologies, and personalities of the Civil War Navy, including A Dog Before a Soldier, Sea Miner, Raising Missouri, and Monitor's Unknown Mission. His presentation focused on the largely forgotten story of a failed U.S. Navy mission, undertaken at the President's request, to destroy railroad bridges connecting Petersburg with Richmond. The Navy committed a dozen gunboats—including the ironclads Monitor and Galena—along with an untested secret weapon. His talk was both informative and well received.

Department Commander Roderick J. Fraser, Jr. followed with greetings from the Department and shared several notable highlights from President Lincoln's life. The brunch concluded with Chaplain Bishop's Benediction. Mr. Veit remained afterward to sign books for attendees who wished to purchase them.
It was a wonderful event with strong participation, and the Department looks forward to hosting the 27th annual Abraham Lincoln Birthday Brunch next year.

Department Commander Roderick J. Fraser, Jr.

Featured speaker, Mr. Chuck Veit

Camp 104 Elects New Officers

Charles H. Bond, Camp 104 elected a new slate of officers. The officers were installed at the Massachusetts National Guard Museum in Concord during their January 2026 meeting. The following officers were installed by Department Senior Vice Commander John Wilder:

Camp Commander: Logan Goodwin
Senior Vice Commander: Richard Nichols
Junior Vice Commander: Matthew Ahern
Secretary: Michael Terry
Treasurer: Ken London

New Camp Commander Logan Goodwin, Senior Vice Commander Richard Nichols, and Junior Vice Commander Matthew Ahern being sworn in as Camp 104 officers for 2026.

The meeting saw the addition of two new members who were initiated into the Order:

Brother George F. Snell III
Brother Matthew Wissell

New Brothers George Snell III, and Matthew Wissell being sworn into the Order.

After the installation of new officers for Camp 104, outgoing Camp Commander Matthew Ahern was presented with an award by the Department Senior Vice Commandeer, John Wilder, in recognition of Brother Matt's contributions to Camp 104 and the SUVCW.

Department of Massachusetts, Senior Vice Commander John Wilder, presenting outgoing Camp Commander Matthew Ahern with an award for his service to Camp 1004 and to the SUVCW

MASSACHUSETTS
Civil War Sons of American Revolution Patriots

William Jones

William Jones was the grandson of Jethro Jones, a free Black man and master toolmaker who lived in Blandford, Massachusetts. Jones fought in the French and Indian Wars, and during the Revolution, he served in the Continental Army as a Private in Capt. Martin's Co., Col. Timothy Bigelow's regt., from 15 May 1777. Jones was honorably discharged in 1783 at West Point, with papers signed by General Henry Knox. In 1818, when he was 85, he began receiving a military pension. He was one of the few dozen African Americans from Hampden County. Massachusetts region to do so. His service was a testament to the skill and independent spirit of free Black craftsmen in the eighteenth century, men who chose to fight for a nation that was still debating their right to exist in freedom.

Civil War Service

William Jones was one of 74 men from Berkshire County, Massachusetts who served in the 54th regiment. Jones was born in Sheffield in 1818, at a time when about 5 to 6% of the town's population was Black. He became a laborer and farmer. He and his wife Mary Jones had ten children. At the age of 45, which was considered old for military service, he signed up to serve. Jones was assigned to Company B and served from 18 December 1863 until 20 August 1865. Jones fought gallantly in the assault on Fort Wagner (July 18, 1863) as well as the Battle of Grimball's Landing, the Battle of Olustee, FL, and the Battle of Honey Hill near Ridgeland, SC. William Jones was a member of Grand Army of the Republic Gen. J. G. Barnard Post No. 210 in Sheffield, Massachusetts.

The Jones family's contribution to the 54th Massachusetts was not limited to William. At least five family members served in the 54th, including William's nephews, Samuel Jones and Henry Jones, both of whom volunteered from Pittsfield. This cluster of service demonstrates how the military tradition was often a localized, family-driven commitment. The same Berkshire communities that supported Jethro Jones in the 1770s became the recruitment hubs for his grandsons and great-grandsons in the 1860s.

"We want to make sure people recognize the significant contribution of the eleven men from Sheffield who served in the 54th," said Paul O'Brien, president of the Sheffield Historical Society. "With William being 45-years-old, I think that's a true statement of his patriotism and his honor to serve his country."

Jocelyn Jones Arnold, the great-great-grand niece of William Jones, said she believes he felt it was important to be part of something bigger than himself. Jocelyn Arnold Jones said that members of her family from Pittsfield attended the Second Congregational Church, which was led by Reverend Samuel Harrison. He served as the chaplain of the 54th regiment and negotiated for equal pay for Black soldiers in the Civil War.

Camp 25 Elects New Officers

On February 2, 2026, after the initiation of new brother Donald McKinnon, new officers were installed at Willie Grout Camp No. 25 by Department of Massachusetts Commander Rod Fraser. Dan Anderson was installed as Camp Commander. Jon Cheney was installed as Senior Vice Commander. PCC Matty Sargent was installed as Junior Vice Commander, Civil War Memorials Officer, and Grave Registration Officer. Jim Pinzino was installed as Secretary and Treasurer. PDC George Maple was installed as Chaplain, Guard, and Council 1. Cole Anderson was installed as Patriotic Instructor and Council 2. PCinC Ed Norris was installed as Historian. Sam Anderson was installed as Color Bearer. Rey Rodrigues was installed as Council 3. Also attending were National Presidential Liaison for WRC and ASUVCW Dept. of New England Council Member Melissa Anderson and WRC / ASUVCW / DUVCW / LGAR sister Alexandra Anderson.

After the installations, the camp enjoyed homemade cowboy cookies by the newly installed Patriotic Instructor.

New camp Commander Dan Anderson and his brother officers being installed by Department Commander Rod Frazer

As part of the installation ceremony, Commander Fraser presented the new Camp Commander, Dan Anderson, with the Camp 25 Camp Commander's badge as well as a photo. Commander Fraser had taken the photo the first time he met Dan and his son Cole. The photo is of Cole adjusting his father's belt before a headstone dedication - with a bit of AI work to change the background from a pickup truck to a Civil War camp.

DEPARTMENT NEWS

Increase in Membership

Massachusetts has had a net increase in membership since last year at this time. We are now at 159 Brothers, compared to 154 this time last year. We have brought in a number of new Brothers, but those numbers were partially offset by the loss of 5 Brothers who passed away.

Department Christmas Party

The Department held its annual Christmas Party at the Chelsea Soldiers Home. PDC Dexter Bishop, who usually organizes and serves as Master of Ceremonies for this yearly event, was unable to attend this year. Still, Brother Bishop assembled dozens of gift bags for the Soldiers' Home residents. The process Brother Bishop established allowed the party to continue in his absence. Commander in Chief Kevin Tucker stepped in as Master of Ceremonies, with Camp 22 Commander Charles Lewis serving as the party coordinator. Brother Jim Doran and his son, Joseph Doran, helped with serving the disabled veterans in attendance. Brother Jim Doran doubled as the bass player with Phil Cochran on the piano, playing Christmas tunes. The ladies from New Hampshire, led by ASUVCW Member Linda Murray, crafted and donated winter hats and blankets for the veterans. The Soldiers Home staff assisted and joined in with the festivities.

Lincoln Birthday Brunch

The Department held its 26th Annual Abraham Lincoln Birthday Brunch, Sunday, February 15th, 2026 In Wakefield, MA. The event sold out and featured guest speaker Mr. Chuck Viet, a Civil War naval historian, Lecturer, and Author. An article covering this event in more detail can be found in this edition of *The Clarion Call*.

Department Encampment

The 2026 Department Encampment will be April 24th and 25th at Embassy Suites by Hilton Boston Marlborough located at 123 Boston Post Road West, Marlborough, MA 01752. Friday, April 24th will be our traditional Campfire. Saturday, April 25th, will be our Memorial Ceremony, Business Meeting, and Awards Banquet. The Friday Night “Campfire” is free and members and their guests are welcome to attend. Entertainment for the “Campfire” will be provided by *Red Horse Oldtime Duo,* a local group playing Irish, Scottish, Oldtime, and Civil War tunes on fiddle, mandolin, and guitar. And for those hoping to dance, the group says you can absolutely dance to their music.

L. A. Tifft Camp 15 Ordnance Rifle Restoration

The L. A. Tifft Camp 15, through the camp Commander and the Memorials officer, has been working with the Town of Belchertown to rebuild/restore the cobble masonry base for the 3"Ordnance Rifle that is on the Town Common. The efforts have included documentation and the pursuit of three grants to fund this project, with the goal of completing the work before Memorial Day 2026.

Charles H. Bond, Camp 104 Ongoing Headstone Restoration and Graves Registration

Charles H. Bond, Camp 104, has been in ongoing communications with the cemetery commission at Lakeside Cemetery in Wakefield, MA, regarding their ongoing restoration project of the GAR plot with plans to install an SUVCW marker and possibly new headstones for unmarked Civil War soldiers. In addition, Brother Richard Nichols continues his cataloging and registering of graves in local cemeteries in conjunction with Brother Bill Naughton (graves registration officer). He is currently working on cemeteries in Haverhill, Mass.

CLARION CALL PUBLICATION DATES AND ARTICLE SUBMISSIONS

The Clarion Call is published quarterly. Anticipated publication months are December, March, June, and September (to give a few extra weeks to register for our Gettysburg trip). The Editor will email a "Call for articles" to Department Officers and Camp Commanders approximately 14 days prior to publication. However, any Brother who would like to submit an article or Camp news may do so at any time by contacting the Editor at suvcwclarioncall@gmail.com.

FROM THE PATRIOTIC INSTRUCTOR

Massachusetts, the Civil War, and the Patriotism We Preserve

Massachusetts holds a unique place in the Union's story. When the nation fractured in 1861, the Commonwealth stepped forward with conviction. The Sixth Massachusetts Regiment was among the first to answer Lincoln's call, shedding early Union blood in Baltimore and signaling the state's unwavering commitment to preserving the nation.

Long before the first shots were fired, Massachusetts had been a center of abolitionist thought and moral leadership. Its citizens understood that defending the Union and ending slavery were inseparable duties. This principled resolve shaped the state's wartime identity.

The legacy of the 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry stands as one of the Commonwealth's greatest contributions. Their courage at Fort Wagner proved that patriotism is defined by character and sacrifice, not circumstance. Their service helped transform the meaning of citizenship and advanced the cause of freedom.

For the Sons of Union Veterans, this history is not distant. It is a living inheritance. The patriotism of the Union soldiers—active, principled, and rooted in unity—guides the work of preserving their memory and protecting the ideals for which they fought.

In a time when the meaning of patriotism is often debated, Massachusetts' Civil War legacy offers clarity: true patriotism is the willingness to stand for the nation's highest ideals and to carry forward the unfinished work of a more perfect Union.

In Fraternity, Charity, and Loyalty,

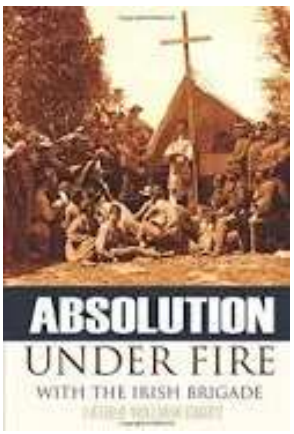
George Maple
Patriotic Instructor
Dept of Massachusetts

BOOK REVIEW

Absolution Under Fire by Father William Corby

"Absolution Under Fire," written by Father William Corby, chronicles the experiences of the Irish Brigade during the American Civil War through the personal lens of a chaplain who served these soldiers on the battlefield. Corby, an Irish-American himself, provides not only a historical account but also a deeply personal narrative that explores themes of faith, sacrifice, and identity.

The book opens with Corby's arrival at the front lines, a period marked by the eagerness of Irish immigrants to prove their loyalty to America. Despite facing discrimination and skepticism about their commitment to the Union cause, these soldiers displayed remarkable bravery. Corby emphasizes the struggle of the Irish Brigade to gain acceptance while highlighting their courageous contributions to the war effort.



One of the most significant aspects of Corby's role as a chaplain was providing spiritual support to soldiers in the midst of chaos. The book details his experiences administering the Sacrament of Penance, offering absolution to men who believed they might die in combat. This aspect of his ministry underscores the intersection of faith and warfare, as Corby sought to offer comfort and solace to those facing the grim realities of battle. His reflections on the moral implications of war create a thought-provoking dialogue about duty and morality in the context of conflict.

The book vividly recounts key battles, particularly the brutal clash at Gettysburg, where the Irish Brigade gained a reputation for its tenacity and sacrifice. Corby does not shy away from depicting the horrors of war; his accounts of injuries and loss highlight the emotional toll on both the soldiers and their communities. The author's intimate portrayals allow readers to grasp the profound grief experienced by soldiers and their families as they navigate the constant threat of death.

"Absolution Under Fire" offers a compelling blend of personal reflection and historical documentation. Father William Corby's experiences provide invaluable insights into the lives of the Irish Brigade during the Civil War, making this book an essential resource for those interested in military history, religious studies, and the immigrant experience in America. Through Corby's narrative, readers gain a profound understanding of the complexities of faith, duty, and the human spirit in wartime.

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